

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 21, 2002 (BOS Mtg. 3/5/02)

TO: York County Board of Supervisors

FROM: James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

SUBJECT: EDS Telephonic Automated Inspection Request and Plan Review Information System Replacement

Introduction:

The County recently learned that the vendor who supplies and services the software that supports the call-in inspection system will not service the software beyond March 1, 2002. This system is a critical component in the building permit and inspection system. Without a similar system the level of service in these vital areas would be seriously degraded and would likely return to pre-1999 levels.

The Capital Improvement Plan calls for enhancing this system. The Fiscal Year 2002 and 2003 CIP includes computer access that will allow citizens to submit customer requests and complaints and obtain information directly from a computer management system via the Internet and a call center to provide and automated attendant to answer routine calls and inquiries. Fiscal Year 2004 includes a web-based solution that will allow contractors and citizens to apply for and pay for specific types of building permits directly from a computer management system via the Internet. Prior to notification of the fact that this system would no longer be supported staff had already started the process of soliciting proposals for these enhancements. Fortunately, the proposals received will allow for replacement of the system and procurement of the enhancements all within the limits of the funds currently available and in the CIP.

Background:

During 1998 the Department of Environmental and Development Services (EDS) implemented an information management system that integrated all aspects of the development process from the plan approval stage through the site and building construction phases and concluded with the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. A component of this system was the purchase of telephonic software called the Automated Inspection Request and Plan Review Information System (System). This System integrated the current computer work management system data and allowed customers, primarily developers and contractors, to schedule, cancel, or obtain status of building permit inspections and development plan reviews via the telephone. The System ideally suited this customer base because it was geared toward their primary communication means, the cell-phone, and allowed these customers to coordinate with Building Regulation and Development and Compliance division staff on the "fly".

The System has literally saved County staff and our customers thousands of man-hours since its inception. It has allowed our customers to actively interface with the County data System on a 24/7 schedule rather than during County business hours only. The System is a vast improvement over the previous manual system where contractors had to request and process inspections over the counter at Building Regulation or by standard voice mail. Developers had to call in a status request, and then wait for a return call by staff, all during the County's business hours. In addition, the automation of scheduling and updating of inspections has allowed the inspectors more time in the field to perform inspections as well as provide contractors with access to real time inspection results. As a result, the System has become integral of the service delivery system in the Building Regulation and Development and Compliance Divisions.

Situation:

The software vendor, Vodavi, recently notified EDS that they planned to discontinue the software and, more importantly, their technical support of the System at the conclusion of the maintenance agreement, which occurs in March 2002. After March, should the current System experience technical problems with the software, EDS will not have the means to fix the problem and building contractors and homeowners will not be able to access the System. Should this occur it will have a significant impact on the efficient processing of building inspections and customer interface within the Building Regulation and Development and Compliance Divisions and, more importantly, would put our customer service back to pre-1999 levels.

Procurement Action:

With the support of the Department of Financial and Management Services, EDS issued a Request for Proposals to replace the System's telephonic software from companies who offered both this technology and Internet integration. Specifically, we requested that the vendors provide software options that integrated our telephonic system with the World Wide Web in order to provide the same interaction by customers through the Internet for the services we currently provide via the telephone system. This feature will add another avenue of information interface with our customers and citizens. In addition, we requested these companies provide proposals for an automated Call Attendant option that would better facilitate telephone call routing, provide complaint tracking and follow-up, and provide more flexible information messaging on our telephone system during emergencies and special events. This feature benefits all the EDS divisions, but more importantly, our customers and citizens who would get more timely response and attention to both their information requests and complaints. Both these options are consistent and compatible with our customer service information goals for FY03 and beyond.

Seven firms responded to the Request for Proposals. An evaluation committee, composed of staff from EDS, Computer Support Services, and the Purchasing Agent, reviewed all seven written proposals and selected the three best for interviews. After the interviews the three firms were ranked, with Frank Solutions, Inc. of Greenwood Village, Colorado, being ranked first. A price was negotiated with Frank Solutions, Inc., in the amount of

\$65,260 for the Automated Inspection Request and Plan Review Information System replacement, with the added benefit of the Call Attendant software integrated at no cost. An optional cost of \$31,200 was negotiated for the Web integration of the System software. FY02 funds were made available from the general, utility and the solid waste funds for the replacement System. Funds for the Web integration software are proposed in the FY03 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget.

Recommendation:

Given the critical nature of the requested system I recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt resolution R02-52 to authorize the execution of contracts to replace the System immediately and purchase the web integration software after July 1, 2002.

Hudgins/3755:mw
Attachment: